

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

LUND *BT*

THOMPSON *AT*

CHILCOTT *ag*

TAYLOR (Clerk & Recorder)

Date.....January 30, 2006

Members Commissioner Greg Chilcott and
Commissioner Betty Lund

Minutes: Glenda Wiles

The Board met with Maintenance Supervisor Brian Jameson in regard to various maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

In other business the Board met with Val Widmer, the Victim Witness Coordinator for Ravalli County. She presented the Sub Grant Application with the Montana Board of Crime Control for approval and signatures. Ravalli County submits an application for this annual grant. Commissioner Lund made a motion to have the Chairman sign this Sub Grant application. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion and all voted "aye".

The Board met to discuss the roadless issue. This issue is in regard to the open/closed roads within the Forest Service boundaries. Citizen Dave Olson and Mike Jeffords were present for this discussion and, due to Commissioner Alan Thompson's illness, it was agreed that a more formal discussion would be held on Wednesday as regularly scheduled.

The Board met with members of the RC&D in regard to an update on the Fire Plan. Members present were Kit Sutherland, Jim Freeman and Byron Bonney. Also present was Mike Hansen of the West Fork Volunteer Fire District and Interim Planning Director Karen Hughes.

Jim gave some background to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of the Interface Task Force that was done in 1991. The MOU included a Valley-Wide Fire Plan and included the wildland urban interface. Since that time the valley has experienced large fires and they have moved into a 'Community-Based Fire Plan'. This fire plan was designed with action items, designed by local committees addressing specific communities. Since 2002, they have had two updates to include the accomplishments and new national standards for wildland urban interface. Byron stated the plan was last updated in the spring of 2005. They revised some of the mapping with the help of the Forest Service and DNRC.

Commissioner Chilcott asked if the wildland urban interface could be identified in order to help the Planning Staff identify those areas in application for subdivision. Byron stated the definition is where the fuels intermingle with development. Commissioner Chilcott stated that type of definition does not lend itself to specific locations, and indicated it would be nice to have a map that specifically identifies those locations. Byron stated they were specifically vague because the fire hazards change, dependent upon weather and vegetation as a result of the drought. He stated fire behavior could be identified through numerous variables. Those variables identify the model, in order to identify the type of fire suppression to be used.

Byron indicated the community should review the fire behavior that includes the embers that blow a mile ahead of a moving fire. Kit also stated they are working with the Forest Service to determine those areas that can be included in the wild land urban interface. Mike stated there are areas that are specifically at risk, and they find most people feel they can rebuild their house but the forest around them cannot be re-built and that view brings value to the home and property. Commissioner Chilcott stated it is important for the residents to have good information in front of them so they can identify their properties within those specific areas. He stated he would like to include this information in the Subdivision Regulations. Kit stated he understands the need to be more specific in the regulations. Karen also indicated the fire issue is a long-term maintenance issue that the new landowner needs to be aware of. Concern for the issue does not stop at the time of final plat to the subdivision.

Byron also presented an addendum to the Bitterroot Community Wildfire Protection Plan for 2006. Kit also explained how private landowners could utilize the services of RC& D in order to determine the need and manner in which to protect properties. He stated there are grant monies available to help in the fuel reduction efforts. Byron explained how timber removed could provide an in-kind match for the cost of the project.

Byron also explained while they have done quite a bit in the past three years, there is still much to be done in order to assist with the fuel reduction issues.

In other business, Commissioner Lund participated in a conference call with RCEDA.